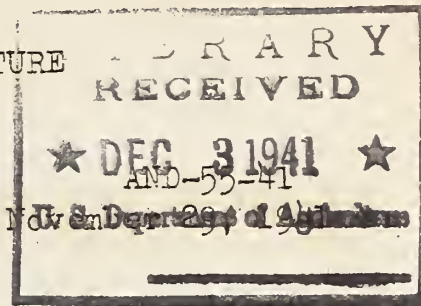


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of Information



AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MOBILIZES: Radio series under this name begins on National Farm and Home Hour on Thursday, December 11, and on each Tuesday thereafter for an indefinite period. Programs already are tentatively scheduled through February. Members of State and County USDA boards will be called on to participate in these broadcasts. Members of the New Hampshire USDA defense board will broadcast on "The Job Ahead" from New York City on December 11. On the following Tuesday the Iowa USDA defense board will talk about "Keeping Farm Machines in Front Lines" from Chicago. "Beef for America and Britain" will be the subject for the Nebraska USDA defense board on December 23. From this point programs are tentative.

BUY ICELAND'S FISH: Hal Bjornson, formerly with Farm Credit Administration, will go to Iceland shortly where he will purchase fish from Icelandic fishermen with lend-lease funds for shipment to Britain. The fish will be purchased with American dollars and checked against British lease-lend. This will afford Iceland with American dollars to buy food in this country. (Money spent for the fish will not be charged against the Dept's lease-lend commitment. Another fund has been set aside for this purpose.)

SPAB OK'S FARM MACHINERY PLAN: The Supplies Priorities and Allocations Board, headed by Vice-President Wallace, put its stamp of approval on the plan to provide materials for the farm equipment industry. New machines will be limited to 80 percent of 1940, and repairs 150 percent. A high priority rating will guarantee delivery of materials. Supplies of some repair parts will be greater than others, dairy equipment up 200 percent for instance. These allowances are made from the defense board machinery survey which showed greater needs in some lines.

PLANT SITE PROTESTS: Acquisition of land for the new explosives program will definitely affect agriculture. The War Department is sympathetic with agriculture's problems, and has made every effort to avoid taking over good farm land. But each explosives plant requires level land near an almost unlimited supply of water, and good transportation and power facilities. They must be inland, and must fit in geographically with the ordnance plant network. The War Department has combed the Nation searching for suitable sites and finds it practically impossible to avoid getting into farm land for the new program.

Farmers as a rule realize that the Army is fighting desperately against time, has made extensive and far-reaching surveys before a site is actually selected, and has taken into consideration agricultural problems. Any protests on sites from farmers should be thoughtfully considered and should include suggestions for alternate sites.

BIG PUSH ON CONSERVATION, SUBSTITUTION, AND SALVAGE: Substitution of more abundant materials for critical materials, elimination of waste, and salvage of metals is being vigorously pushed by defense agencies, and farmers should begin now adjusting to this effort. OPM, for example, is asking manufacturers of barn equipment to substitute wood for metals. Civilian requirements for strategic materials are being cut to the bone.

LABORATORIES GET PRIORITY ORDER: OPM has assigned an A-5 (defense) rating (Preference Rating Order P-62) for the production of laboratory equipment and reagent materials. The order covers public laboratories and those commercial organizations licensed by the Department of Agriculture to carry out analytical and control work authorized by law.

LOOKING AHEAD ON INSECTICIDES: Office of Agricultural Defense Relations strongly recommends that farmers start figuring on their future requirements for insecticides, fungicides, and fumigants. Reason is that OPM may soon issue a priority order on insecticides, fungicides, and disinfectants, which will enable distributors to get supplies according to orders on their books.

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FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

AGRICULTURE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN DEVELOPMENTS: UNITED KINGDOM: In a speech before the House of Commons, the Minister of Agriculture (R. S. Hudson) emphasized the following points with respect to future British agricultural policy:

1. That farmers would be quite safe in planning a continuation of their present operations (i.e., with each farm producing a maximum volume of food) until the 1945 harvest, and that they should work out their farm programs with that fact in mind;

2. That in view of existing supplies of labor, machinery, and fertilizers no further substantial increase in arable land could be contemplated, but that from now on farmers should concentrate on consolidating gains already made;

3. That the Government was taking steps for the formation of a sound post-war agricultural policy. In that connection, a survey is under way with a view to preparing a map for each farm showing its natural potentialities, soil characteristics, present state of cultivation, acreages under various crops, animal population, and condition of farm buildings.

4. That attention was being devoted to determining what needed to be done to assure that sufficient labor and building material would be available when the war was over to provide cottages required to house the rural population and to repair farm buildings;

5. That the Ministry of Agriculture welcomed the recent action of the Agricultural Wages Board in raising the minimum wage of farm workers to 60 shillings (\$12.11) a week, but that the Government was now confronted with the problem of adjusting agricultural returns to cover the increased cost of production. In that connection, the Minister emphasized that the urban population of the country would have to be educated to accept the fact that agricultural workers could not be paid a reasonable wage, and that their employers (the farm owners and operators) could not be expected to keep their land in cultivation and maintain soil fertility, unless townspeople were willing to pay a reasonable price for the food which they purchased.

6. That the traditional insistence of the great trade unions and industrial workers for cheap food from abroad had resulted for generations not only in "sweated labor" for farmer workers at home, but also in "sweated land" in the primary producing countries overseas. That if the United Kingdom hoped to see a revival of British export trade and its accompanying employment of large numbers of British people after the war it would be necessary to assure that consuming countries abroad purchasing British goods are prosperous. That since those consuming countries are agricultural countries, they could be prosperous only if the British are willing to pay a high enough price for food imports to enable farmers in the exporting countries to cultivate their lands and to maintain their soil fertility.

The Ministry of Food announced that the current special cheese ration would be increased from 8 ounces to 12 ounces per week, effective December 15. The special ration is available only to priority consumers (i.e., vegetarians, agricultural workers, underground miners, county and rural district roadmen, forestry workers, land drainage and catchment board workers, the women's land army, canal maintenance men, certain classes of railwaymen and agricultural industry workers, and roadstone and limestone quarrymen.) The cheese ration for non-priority consumers remains at 3 ounces per week.

The Ministry also announced that priority in fresh egg supplies would be given to nursing and expectant mothers, to certain classes of invalids, and children under 6 years. Moreover, four eggs per month will be the allowance for priority consumers instead of one egg per month as heretofore. Egg distributions to retailers are made irregularly because of the supply situation. It was emphasized, however, that priority classes in urban districts would obtain at least one egg per week, while the non-priority classes would continue to receive only one egg per month.

The Ministry of Food announced that dairymen had been instructed not to deliver more than 2 pints of fresh milk per week to non-priority consumers, effective November 23. It was pointed out that in some areas the supply would not allow this amount to be distributed but that supplies would be redirected to make distribution as even as possible. Nursing and expectant mothers, children, invalids, and hospitals are assured of their priority supply. Producer-retailers in towns of less than 30,000 population are not affected by the new cut.

SOUTH AFRICA: The purchase by the United States (Defense Supplies Corporation) of 125,000,000 pounds of British owned South African wool was announced in South Africa. The price at which the purchase was made was not made public. The wool will be added to the "stockpile" owned or stored in the United States.

EGYPT: The Egyptian Government decided under a law dated October 30, 1941, to discourage to a certain extent the cultivation of cotton by agreeing to pay a bounty ranging from 150 to 200 piasters per feddan (\$6.00 to \$8.00 per acre) to cultivators who plant their lands to barley, beans, and wheat.

NEW ZEALAND: High wages and enlistments have stimulated increased purchases of farm machinery by New Zealand farmers. The number of electric motors in use on farms at the end of 1940 stood at 62,000,000 compared with 57,000,000 a year previous. The number of milking machines in use increased by 1,300,000 in the same period. However, the use of separators is declining due to the shift from butter to cheese production.

Wool manufacturing facilities have increased considerably and further expansion is expected as soon as machinery ordered from abroad can be delivered. However, there is a shortage of some lines of woollen goods because of reduced imports and the concentration of mills on supplying lines for military purposes.